

# **WATERFRONT PLAN**

City of Alexandria, Department of Planning and Zoning

## **BOAT TOUR – SATURDAY MAY 30, 2009**

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**Department of Planning and Zoning**  
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### **General Overview**

When Captain John Smith sailed up the Potomac from Jamestown in 1608, he found five American Indian villages in an area south of the Great falls near the site of present day Alexandria. Archaeologists have found evidence of campsites and tool working sites in many locations in Alexandria, particularly along streams like Hunting Creek, Holmes Run, and Taylor Run. Among the Native Americans inhabiting the area were the Tauxenents and Nacotchtanks, which were part of the Conoy chiefdom.

During the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century, settlers began to establish small plantations near landing places on the Potomac River. Ocean going ships could load tobacco and other goods for export to Great Britain. The area that was to become Alexandria was sparsely settled by the 1740s, with a handful of tobacco warehouses and plantations. By 1728 Fredericksburg was the northernmost town in the Virginia colony and by 1742 Fairfax County was formed. At the time, most Virginia settlers in the area lived inland where lands were well suited for the production of agricultural and tobacco production. In 1748 Hugh West, William Ramsay, John and Philip Alexander, among others, petitioned the colonial government of Virginia to establish a new market town.

The town of Alexandria was established in 1749 by an Act of the Virginia General Assembly because it was located at the uppermost Virginia anchorage on the tidal Potomac where the town would be “commodious for trade and navigation and tend greatly to the best advantage of frontier inhabitants”. At the time, the town covered about 21 blocks (60 acres). It extended from the Potomac River to the properties on the west side of Royal Street. In 1755, British General Edward Braddock made the town his headquarters in his mission to quell the escalating French and Indian Wars. In 1763 there was a major land sale in Alexandria and soon after efforts to “bank out” the shoreline of the small bay on the town’s waterfront began. The subdivision of these early lots provided space for increasing numbers of tradesmen and artisans eager to share in the town’s prosperity. In these early years, Alexandria grew quickly and received a city charter in 1780.

The River was the City's highway, providing the principal means of transportation for goods and people. Alexandria quickly became an important regional market and international exporter of tobacco, grain, pork, fish, lumber, and commodities and importer of manufactured goods from London, Glasgow and other Atlantic and Caribbean ports. In 1795, Alexandria was one of the busiest ports in the United States, and an official Port of Entry, with 1000 vessels entering the port annually.

Commercial prosperity encouraged further development of the waterfront. By 1790, merchants had filled in the river flats for as much as 400 feet beyond the original shoreline to create "superb wharves and vast warehouses".

Alexandria also traded slaves. Before the Revolution, virtually all African Americans living within the existing boundaries of Alexandria were slaves. By 1770, free blacks increased in number and their numbers grew especially between 1790 and 1810. Alexandria slaves also purchased their own freedom or were freed by whites for personal or moral reasons. In the 1820's, interstate slave traders established businesses here. One of the most infamous slave trading establishments in the area was located at 1315 Duke Street, now the site of the Northern Virginia Urban League's Freedom House Museum. The business was established in 1828, and by 1835 commanded nearly half of the slave trade by sea between New Orleans and Virginia/Maryland. By 1860, the black population was half-free and half-slave due to the influx of free blacks from rural areas.

African Americans can be credited for helping to shape much of Alexandria. They graded the bluff overlooking the Potomac River, and built roads and wharves to expand Alexandria's trade. Enslaved and free blacks worked in many Alexandria businesses including potteries, sugar refineries, ropewalks, and shipyards. In the early 1800's, wharves and warehouses were commonplace along the waterfront and largely contributed to the bustling port economy in Alexandria. It was also the site of a "fish town", a seasonal community of African Americans who processed fish in a makeshift shantytown.

On January 22, 1791, George Washington appointed surveyors to establish the boundaries for the home of the federal government – the District of Columbia – to begin with Alexandria's Jones point as the southern corner of a 10-mile square diamond to be laid out on a north-south axis. Thirty-seven of the 40 original boundary stones still exist, including one near the lighthouse at Jones Point, with four others also located within the current limits of Alexandria.

Alexandria did not prosper from its association with Washington, DC, as the District had not become the major commercial and industrial center that had been envisioned. In 1846, the District residents southwest of the river voted to accept the retrocession of Alexandria to the Commonwealth of Virginia. The retrocession occurred in 1847.

In the decade just prior to the Civil War, Alexandria had become increasingly prosperous, and its population doubled within that period. However, Alexandria voters supported Virginia's secession from the Union in May 1861 and the outbreak of the Civil War was immediate within the City. Alexandria was occupied by Federal troops and became the transportation and distribution center for men and materials for the Army of the Potomac. Upon arriving in the city in the early morning hours of May 24, 1861, Union troops marched up Cameron Street to take command of the City. In a hastily arranged retreat the outnumbered Alexandria militia assembled at the corner of Prince and Washington streets and fled west on Duke Street to join other Southern troops near Manassas. At the same time, Col. Elmer Ellsworth, an aide to President Abraham Lincoln, spotted a rebel flag flying atop the Marshall House hostelry at the corner of King and S. Pitt Streets. He entered the building, climbed to the roof, and removed the flag. Upon descending the staircase, he was immediately shot and killed by the lodging's proprietor, James W. Jackson, who was in turn killed by Ellsworth's men. The killings marked a significant milestone in the war, with each man's death used as a rallying cry in the call for recruits to their respective sides.

During the war, the City's wharves were soon occupied with 40 ships a day. Warehouses were built to provide space for war equipment, foodstuffs and other needs associated with the war effort. Private homes and public buildings were commandeered for used as military housing, hospitals, and command posts. Within a short time, the City found itself as an ill-equipped medical center attending to the needs of thousands of wounded troops, and as a refuge for African Americans seeking freedom from slavery in the deep South. By the war's end, the economy of the City was in shambles from which it took decades to recover.

From the 1850s through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, railroads brought profound change to Alexandria's landscape. Growth shifted to the western edge of the City, near the Southern railway and the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad lines. In the 1880s's electric and telephone service reached the City and new industries were established such as the Robert Porter Brewing Company.

In the early twentieth century, the waterfront continued to function as a commercial port with little industry. Wood, coal, flour were exported. Several steamship lines and a ferry provided transportation for people. Some buildings were requisitioned or built specifically to help war efforts, such as the Virginia Shipbuilding Company and Torpedo Factory during World War I and II. In the post-war period, the area continued its character associated with storing, processing, sales and transport of guns, local agricultural products, and paper, including a rendering plant. In about 1930, noted architect Alfred Kahn designed a new Ford Motor Company Plant on the waterfront. Soon after, in 1932, the George Washington Memorial Parkway opened connecting Mount Vernon with the City of Washington. A little over a decade later the nation's third historic district was established in the heart of Alexandria. By the 1950's the City had become a major bedroom suburb to nearby Washington.

During the 1960s, an urban renewal plan was adopted for King Street. Following these renewal efforts, the City embarked on a program to remove from the waterfront industrial activities which were no longer compatible with the nearby restored residential areas and the revitalized commercial area, and which were not dependent upon waterborne transportation. The Torpedo Factory was discovered by the Arts Community and open in 1974. This reuse was the beginning of the transition of the waterfront from an industrial/commercial seaport to an arts/cultural destination. After much study and public input, a joint plan for the area was prepared by the U.S. Interior Department and the City of Alexandria in May 1982. In the mid-80s, all the Torpedo factory structures were demolished or rehabbed as a new arts center and office/residential. A series of public parks were also created with a pedestrian walkway along the river: Canal Tide Lock, Point Lumley, and Roberdeau.

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## **Settlement Agreements**

Contested property claims between the United States, the City and riparian landowners arose from longstanding boundary disputes dating back to colonial times. This was further complicated in 1791 when lands were ceded for the creation of the District of Columbia, then in 1847 retroceded to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The United States claimed that it acquired title to the bed of the Potomac River and along the Alexandria waterfront up to the high-water mark of the Potomac when the State of Maryland ceded an area of land to the Federal Government in 1789 for the creation of the District of Columbia.

The Federal Government maintained that the State of Maryland had been the proprietary owner of the bed of the Potomac River from bank to bank by virtue of a royal charter to Lord Baltimore in 1632.

In 1931, the Supreme Court ruled that the high-water mark as it had existed on January 24, 1791, represented the legal boundary between the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Act of October 31, 1945 fixed the jurisdictional boundary at the pierhead line, but clear title to the property between the pierhead line and the 1791 boundary remained in dispute because no accurate maps existed to show the high-water mark as it existed on January 24, 1791.

In 1973, the United States sued the City of Alexandria and private property holders, claiming ownership of all lands between Third Street and Gibbon Street and east of the high-water mark as it existed on January 24, 1791.

During 1980 and 1981, the City of Alexandria and the National Park Service developed a consensus land-use plan to protect and enhance the waterfront. The plan was based on a policy that the Federal government would not retain fee ownership of any of the waterfront property but would protect the public interest through access and scenic easements.

Goals and objectives that guided the consensus land-use plan for the waterfront included:

- Protection and enhancement of the cultural, natural, and scenic values of the waterfront and the Potomac River
- Preservation and creation of open space along the waterfront in order to provide greater public access to the river.
- Providing parkland and recreational facilities, including a pedestrian walkway and bike trail along the waterfront.
- Establishment of controls that limit heights, densities, and uses to be compatible with the historic district, natural resources, floodplain regulations, and scenic vistas.
- Reinforcement of the relationship between the river and the historic town.
- Removal of obsolete and/or incompatible industrial and other uses along the shoreline.

In 1981, the City of Alexandria and the United States Department of Justice negotiated an out-of-court settlement for five City-claimed properties and certain street ends. During the 1980's, out-of-court settlements were reached with most private property owners as well.

NOTES:

1) More information on specific settlement agreements will be provided at each site.

2) Standard restriction on all the settlements:

- All works in the waters or on the bed of the Potomac River requires appropriate permits from the Army Corps of Engineers, The Department of the Interior (National Parks Service) and other government agencies as required by law.

For parks/areas of public access:

- No motorized vehicles are permitted in the public access area except those used for construction, maintenance, repair policing and emergencies.

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## **Current Zoning (1992)**

### Waterfront Park and Recreation Zone (WPR)

#### *Permitted uses:*

- A) Public Buildings;
- B) Public parks, playgrounds, athletic fields or other outdoor recreation facilities;
- C) Retail and/or service commercial when accessory to a permitted use, provided it does not occupy more than ten percent of the land area.

#### *Special use:*

- A) Bike rental;
- B) Commercial outdoor recreational facilities;
- C) Facilities used for docking or berthing of boats or ships, including private or public marinas and/or boat clubs with related facilities limited to water and electricity connections;
- D) Outdoor food and crafts markets;
- E) Privately-owned public use buildings, such as civic auditoriums or performing arts centers;
- F) Restaurants, including outdoor cafes.

Coverage: No more the 30 percent of lot, parcel or tract may be covered by building.

Height: No building shall exceed 30 feet in height.

## Waterfront Mixed Use Zone (W-1)

### *Permitted uses:*

- A) Residential;
- B) Business and professional office;
- C) Public Buildings;
- D) Public parks, athletic fields or other outdoor recreation facilities;
- E) Public utility service yard and/or electrical receiving or transforming station, provided the use was in existence prior to 1982 and has been in continued use thereafter.

### *Special use:*

- A) Commercial outdoor recreational facilities;
- B) Commercial shipping and freight terminal;
- C) Facilities used for docking or berthing of boats or ships, including private or public marinas and/or boat clubs with related facilities limited to water and electricity connections;
- D) Health and athletic club;
- E) Home for the elderly;
- F) Nursery school;
- G) Outdoor food and crafts markets;
- H) Personal service establishment;
- I) Privately-owned public use buildings, such as civic auditoriums or performing arts centers;
- J) Restaurant;
- K) Retail shopping establishment;
- L) Rooming house;
- M) Tourist home;
- N) Utilities.

*Coverage:* The FAR varies between 0.75 and a maximum of 2.0 depending on whether a single or mixed use is proposed or a special use permit is sought.

*Height:* No building shall exceed 55 feet in height.

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## **Hunting Towers/Porto Vecchio**

### *History:*

Early archaeological findings uncovered pre-historic Native American occupation, while later historical records documented that the area, once known as Broomilawn Point, was once the picnic destination for

Alexandria residents. The area was also home to Alexandria's first mayor, Robert T. Hooe.

The area transitioned from primarily residential to industrial in the mid-to-late 1800s with the construction of the Manassas Gap Railroad. The railroad separated the Hunting Creek Area from St. Mary's cemetery and later became the location of the Capital Beltway. After the construction of the railroad, the Alexandria Brick Company was constructed in the area, which remained in operation until 1919.

The Hunting Creek Area remained largely inactive between 1919, construction of the GW parkway in 1932, and the construction of the Hunting Terrace apartments in 1943. Until that time, the area was considered by many to be a dumping place for the City's noxious activities. The Hunting Towers apartments were then constructed in 1950, and Porto Vecchio was constructed in the mid-1980s. One of the three towers of the Hunting Towers complex was demolished around 2000 to make way for the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

#### Planning

Hunting Towers	530 rental apartments	Built 1950
Porto Vecchio	170 condominiums	Built mid 1980's
Hunting Terrace (buildings that face the creek, not the river)	116 vacant apartments	Built in 1943

Zoning: RC – High Density Apartments  
Height District – 50 ft maximum height

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### **Jones Point**

#### Planning

Zoning: W1 – Waterfront Mixed Use  
Height District – 30 ft maximum height; 50 ft with SUP

The National Park Service recently completed a plan for Jones Point Park.



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## **Fords Landing**

**River Frontage: *Approximately 625 feet along the official bulkhead line***

### History

Construction began on Keith's Wharf, named for Mayor James Keith, in 1785. It served primarily as a fish wharf and ferry landing. The bulkhead and archaeological resources of the wharf still exists beneath the Ford landing townhomes. In 1861, Battery Rodgers, an earthen gun emplacement, was constructed at the foot of Jefferson Street. Alexandria Marine Railroad Company occupied the site in 1849 and during the Civil War, it became a military railroad wharf. The Alexandria Marine Railway and Shipbuilding Company operated on the site into the twentieth century.

Between 1911 and 1912, Battery Cove (now Fords Landing) was filled and in 1917, it became home to the Virginia Shipbuilding Company, which produced ships for World War I. There are still buried barge shipwrecks within the fill. In 1932, the Ford Motor Company Plant was built in this location by renowned industrial architect Albert Kahn. This served as a wholesale distribution and service center for automobiles until the US Navy put it to use as a temporary munitions factory. Cook Inlet Properties bought the Ford plant in 1985. It was subsequently purchased by Eakin Youngentob Associates in 1996 who intended to preserve the Ford plant but the wood pilings supporting the building were unsound, so the structures had to be demolished.

### Planning

Zoning: W1 – Waterfront Mixed Use

Height District – 30 ft maximum height; 50 ft with SUP

The site was redeveloped in 2000 with 151 townhomes.

### Settlement Agreements

1986 between United States and Cook Inlet Region Inc (CIRI)

1990 between United States and trustees of John H Rust and James M Slack (Successors to CIRI)

According to the agreements, the residential redevelopment of the site had to include the construction and maintenance of a public walkway along the properties frontage. The existing bike trail is re-routed and public access easements are granted through the development to connect the riverfront walkway to South Union Street.

Restrictions:

- The continuous public access along the shoreline is to be used as an open space, public park that may include pedestrian walkways, bicycle trails, open air seating, covered seating under a portico, landscaped areas, fountains, gardens, stairs and ramps to the river level, play areas, plazas and temporary facilities for public events.
  - Height limit of 50 ft
  - Docking for ocean going vessels may be allowed along the side of the existing piers.
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**Pomander Walk/Old Town Yacht Basin**

***River Frontage:***

***Pomander Park: Approximately 190 feet along the official bulkhead line***

***Old Town Yacht Basin: Approximately 475 feet along the official bulkhead line***

Planning

Zoning: WPR – Waterfront Parks and Recreation

Height District – 30 ft maximum height; 50 ft with SUP

In 2002, the City completed a plan for Windmill Hill Park, which includes these areas. The main changes to the park will be the replacement of the bulkhead and a more formalized kayak launch.

Settlement Agreements

1981 – United States and City of Alexandria

The City grants the US a scenic easement for public park and recreation area.

Restrictions:

- The park may include pedestrian walkways, bicycle trails, seating, landscaped areas, fountains, gardens, play areas, plazas, public marinas and related facilities, docking for ships, transient boats and visiting vessels, berthing for historic vessels, outdoor restaurants and cafes, small service establishments for bikers, boaters and pedestrians, museums related to the waterfront and history of Alexandria.
- All uses must remain open and accessible to the public.
- Height limit of 30 ft.
- A 25 ft strip must be reserved for a pedestrian walkway and bike path running north to south across the park.

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## **Harborside**

***River Frontage: Approximately 365 feet along the official bulkhead line***

### History

A private marina was operated by Katie Lang on this site for many years before Harborside was built. Ownership of the marina was in dispute and Lang fought tenaciously for many years to keep the marina. Without clear title Katie could not obtain financing to keep the marina in good shape so by the 1980s the marina was becoming an eyesore, although a number of the larger boats docked there served as homes. Ultimately the courts ruled against Katie and the City and the Federal Government were determined as owners of the site.

### Planning

Zoning: W1 – Waterfront Mixed Use

Height District – 30 ft maximum height; 50 ft with SUP

The site was redeveloped in 1996 with 66 townhomes, including a private marina.

### Settlement Agreements

1982 - United States and VEPCO

VEPCO grants and conveys to the US scenic easements on Parcels A and B and conveys rights and title to all submerged lands of the Potomac River adjacent to Parcel A.

1990 - United States and 400 South Union Street Joint Venture.

The deed is amended to allow residential development of parcel B. The US is granted a variable public access easement through Parcel B to allow access to the river from South Union Street. Parcel A is designated as open space to be used as a public park and recreation area.

### Restrictions:

Parcel A (now Shipyard Park):

- Uses permitted included pedestrian walkways, bike trails, seating, landscaped areas, fountains, gardens, play areas, plazas and temporary facilities for special events.
- All uses must remain open and accessible to the public.
- Height limit of 15 ft.

Parcel B:

- Uses permitted are restaurants and cafes, commercial shops, hotels and motels, offices, residential use, marina service facilities, museums,

outdoor seafood and farmers' markets, vehicular parking, VEPCO power substation, and public park and recreation areas.

- Height limit of 50 ft.
  - FAR 2.5
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### **Robinson Terminal South**

***River Frontage: Approximately 567 feet along the official bulkhead line***

#### History

At Point Lumley in 1752, Thomas Fleming constructed the first ship in Alexandria. Three active wharves were located here. In 1854 Pioneer mill was constructed, which was a steam driven plant producing 800 barrels of flour per day. During the Civil War, the Union confiscated the blocks for use in unloading and storing Army Commissary goods. The area was slow to recover after the Civil War and in 1897 Pioneer mill burned down. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century a number of light industrial uses occupied the block. Since 1939 it has been the site of Robinson Terminal Warehouse Corporation, used for the transportation and storage of newspapers, copy paper and food grade paper.

#### Planning

Zoning: W1 – Waterfront Mixed Use

Height District – 30 ft maximum height; 50 ft with SUP

#### Settlement Agreements

1983 – United States, Robinson Terminal Warehouse Corporation (RTWC), and City of Alexandria

RTWC grants US a scenic easement in all the southern terminal property and agrees to convey title of the waterfront tracts adjacent to the ends of Duke and Wolfe Streets to the City for the development of public parks (now Point Lumley and Roberdeau Parks). The US is granted title to the submerged lands of the Potomac River contiguous to the property.

Parcel E – north of Duke on the Strand – is designated for development (now Alexandria Marine). If the RTWC operations cease, Parcel H (adjacent to River) is designated as open space and the remainder is designated for development.

1987 – United States, Robinson Terminal Warehouse Corporation (RTWC) and City of Alexandria

RTWC agree to construct street end parks and convey interest in parks to the City.

#### Restrictions:

##### Roberdeau and Point Lumley Parks

- Uses permitted include pedestrian walkways, bicycle trail, seating, landscaped areas, fountains, gardens, play areas, plazas and temporary facilities for special events.
- All uses must remain open and accessible to the public.
- No permanent buildings allowed
- No construction of a pier or other marine facility is permitted on the southern half of Point Lumley's waterfront.

##### Parcel E (Alexandria Marine)

- Uses permitted include restaurants and cafes, commercial shops, offices residential use, marina services facility, museums related to the history of the City and waterfront, outdoor framers' and seafood markets, public park and recreation areas.
  - Height limit of 30 ft.
  - FAR 2.5
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### **The Strand Properties**

***River Frontage: Approximately 310 feet along the official bulkhead line***

#### History

0 Prince Street - In 1945 Clarence Robinson leases a "parcel...lying east of the Strand" and the lessees build The Beachcombers restaurant. The restaurant is constructed over the water on concrete pilings, reachable only by pier. As the restaurant is in District waters, drinks may be sold "by the glass". In 1954 fire damages the building and the lessees release it to Robinson. At this time the building is surrounded by concrete and Interarmco is using it to store munitions. In 1963 Robinson deeds the southeast corner of Prince and Strand to the Potomac Arms Corp, a retail outlet for Interarms (trading as Full Metal Jacket). In 1972 the City approves a permit for restaurant boats at the pier behind the store. In 2006 the City purchases the land and buildings at 0 Prince Street.

North Sections: Wholesale groceries and agriculturally related processing businesses occupied this area and stayed into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The mill at 206 S. Union Street is the best surviving example of this agricultural heritage and 203 and 205 S. Strand include parts of 19<sup>th</sup> century warehouses.

Center Section: Barrel makers and commission wholesale merchants were the earliest businesses in this section of the Strand. A coalyard was started in the 1880s and stayed as the focus of the centre section until the 1970s.

South section: This area has been dominated with industrial uses including a Sumac mill and warehouse, a fertilizer business and Robinson arsenal for guns and paper products. Today the Art League occupies the property.

#### Planning

Zoning: W1 – Waterfront Mixed Use

Height District – 30 ft maximum height; 50 ft with SUP

#### Settlement Agreements

There is no settlement agreement on these properties.

The City owns the former Potomac Arms gun store at 0 Prince Street, associated parking lot and the dock up to the river (leased to Nina's Dandy). The City also owns one-third of the parking lot adjacent to that, in front of Chadwick's restaurant. 204 Strand is owned by Frank and Anita Mann. 208 Strand is owned by Robert Sweeney. 210 Strand is City owned. There is no public access to the waterfront from the Strand properties.

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### **Waterfront Park**

***River Frontage: Approximately 248 feet along the official bulkhead line***

#### History

In 1773, Captain John Harper buys a quarter-acre lot at Water (Lee) and Prince with rights to fill in the wetlands. By 1785 the land has been filled and a building erected on the corner of Prince and Union, which is used as a merchant store and residence. By the end of the century, a large number of merchants are leasing space on Harper's Wharf.

In 1843 the Harper property is sold to William Newton McVeigh, a successful merchant, and it then becomes known as McVeigh's Wharf. During the Civil War, McVeigh loses all his properties but regains it in the 1870s and rebuilds the warehouse. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a manufacturer of champagne cider and vinegar occupied the warehouse and Norfolk and Washington Steamboat Co. acquired the wharf. The warehouse is flooded in 1938 and demolished in 1950. George Robinson and Co. uses the property for a concrete plant, and by the 1960s, various small stores occupy The Strand. In the mid 1970's Waterfront park is built and in 1985 the American Academy of Otolaryngology builds its headquarters.

#### Planning

Zoning: WPR – Waterfront Parks and Recreation

Height District – 30 ft maximum height; 50 ft with SUP

### Settlement Agreements

1981 – United States and the City of Alexandria

The City grants and conveys to the US a scenic easement in the park and title to the submerged lands of the Potomac River contiguous to the park.

#### Restrictions:

- Uses may include pedestrian walkways, bicycle trails, seating, landscaped areas, fountains, gardens, play areas, plazas, temporary facilities for special events, docking for transient boats and visiting vessels, as well as permanent berthing for historic vessels so long as they do not require permanent buildings or structures.
  - All uses must remain open and accessible to the public.
  - Height limit of 15 ft.
  - A 25-foot strip of land must be reserved for constructing a pedestrian walkway and bikepath running in a north-south direction across the park.
  - The City may maintain 16 parking spaces on the west side of the park.
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### **Old Dominion Boat Club**

***River Frontage: Approximately 225 feet along the official bulkhead line***

#### History

William Ramsey began banking and filling in this block in the 1780s. Ramsey's wharf at the foot of King Street was very busy, resulting in commercial activity along King Street. The numerous warehouses on the block housed commission merchants and wholesale grocery businesses. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the foot of King Street became a transportation hub with steamboat and ferry service. The ferry service ended during the civil war but was temporarily revived in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century under the Potomac Ferry Company and the creation of the Alexandria Passenger Railway, a horse-drawn trolley line. In 1918, the torpedo factory was built (see below) and the Old Dominion Boat Club moved to the site of the old ferry slip. In 1925, the last warehouse on the property burned down.

#### Planning

Zoning: WPR – Waterfront Parks and Recreation

Height District – 30 ft maximum height; 50 ft with SUP

### Settlement Agreements

There is no settlement agreement on this property.

In a 2008 District Court decision it was held that the US has fee title to the bed of the Potomac River to the high water mark of 1791 and that Old Dominion Boat Club has riparian rights to construct fill and build wharves over the river bed. It was also held that the Boat Club is entitled to possess the two tracts to which it holds record title, as they are both within the 1938 pierhead lines.

The City is in continued negotiations with the boat club regarding alternate options for the location of the parking lot and boat storage area.

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## **Torpedo Factory/ Torpedo Factory Office Building**

### History

On August 5, 1918, the Secretary of the Navy approved the location of a torpedo assembly plant in Alexandria. When construction began on November 12, armistice had just been declared. Torpedo production continued for 4 years. Peacetime use of torpedoes was primarily for iceberg clearing but other factories were better situated for this purpose. Employment at the torpedo factory fell from 500 to 30 men.

During World War II over 5000 employees worked at the Torpedo Factory and women were introduced into the workforce in 1938. After World War II production of torpedoes ended and the buildings were used as offices and a repository for federal record. Such federal record included Nazi war records and antiquities for the Smithsonian.

In 1969, the property was purchased by the City. Building 2 and 10 opened as the Torpedo Factory Arts Center in 1974. Other buildings housed City record, a parking garage and the City's Archaeology program. Building 1 was razed in 1982 to be replaced by a parking garage and town homes (The Residences at the Torpedo Factory). Building 3 – a World War II addition – was redesigned for private office use (Torpedo Factory Office Building). In 1983, the Arts Center reopened in a renovated building 2.

Today the building accommodates 84 art studios, 4 cooperative galleries, the Art League and the offices and exhibits of Alexandria Archeology.

### Planning

Zoning:



Torpedo Factory: CD - Commercial Downtown  
Office Building/retail arcade: KR – King Street Urban Retail  
City Marina: WPR - Waterfront Parks and Recreation  
Height District – 30 ft maximum height; 50 ft with SUP

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### **Torpedo Factory Office Building/Food Court/Chart House**

#### Planning

#### Zoning:

Torpedo Factory Office Building: OC – Office Commercial  
Food Court/Chart House: CD Commercial Downtown  
Height District – 30 ft maximum height; 50 ft with SUP

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### **Harbor Centre**

***River Frontage: Approximately 156 feet along the official bulkhead line***

#### Planning

#### Zoning: CD – Commercial Downtown

Height District – 30 ft maximum height; 50 ft with SUP

#### Settlement Agreements

1981 United States and the City of Alexandria

The City grants and conveys to US a scenic easement in the parkland (Parcel C), for use as a public park and recreation area. The US was also grants title to the submerged lands of the Potomac River contiguous to the park.

1985 United States; Kristos Kiriakow, Anna Kiriakow and Charcoal House, Inc; and City of Alexandria.

The Kiriakows grant and convey to the US a scenic easement in the development parcel (Parcel A). The Kiriakows also agree to construct improvements on the parkland, including a marina, which when complete is conveyed to the City,

#### Restrictions:

#### Parcel A (Development)

- Uses permitted include restaurants and cafes, commercial shops, offices, residential use (second floor and above only; restricted to 40 units), marina service facilities, museums related to the history of the

city and the waterfront, outdoor farmer's and seafood market and public park and recreation areas.

- Height limit of 45 ft.
- FAR 2.85
- Parking at 211 Harbor Center must be screened for the park.

#### Parcel C (Park)

- Uses may include pedestrian walkways, bicycle trails, seating, landscaped areas, fountains, gardens, play areas, plazas, public marinas (including related clubhouses and food service, boat rental, boat storage, repair and fueling facilities), docking for ships, transient boats and visiting vessels, permanent berthing for historic vessels, outdoor restaurants and cafes, small service establishments, and museums related to the history of the city and the waterfront.
- All uses must remain open and accessible to the public.
- Height limit of 30 ft.
- FAR 0.90
- A 25-foot strip of land must be reserved for constructing a pedestrian walkway and bikepath running in a north-south direction across the park.

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### **Founders Park**

***River Frontage: Approximately 810 feet along the official bulkhead line***

#### History

William A. Smoot was a major player in the waterfront of Alexandria and in city politics. He was elected Chairman and Mayor of Alexandria in 1922. The coal and lumberyard he owned stayed in the family until the 1960s, when it was sold by his grandson, Albert A. Smoot. It was around this time that Alexandria City Council was courting Watergate developers to come to Alexandria. The former Smoot coal and lumberyard was the proposed site for Watergate's four 21-story high buildings and marina. Today this is the location of Founders Park.

#### Planning

Zoning: WPR - Waterfront Parks and Recreation

Height District – 30 ft maximum height; 50 ft with SUP

#### Settlement Agreements

1981 - United States and the City of Alexandria

The City grants to the US a scenic easement for use as a public park and grants the US title to the submerged lands of the Potomac River contiguous with the park.

#### Restrictions:

- Uses may include pedestrian walkways, bicycle trails, seating, landscaped areas, fountains, gardens, play areas, plazas, temporary facilities for special events, paved plazas totaling not more than 10,000 square feet, docking for transient boats and visiting vessels, and permanent berthing for historic vessels, but no buildings or structures for docking or berthing may be built in the park.
  - All uses must remain open and accessible to the public.
  - Height limit of 15 ft.
  - A 25-foot strip of land must be reserved for constructing a pedestrian walkway and bikepath running in a north-south direction across the park.
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### **Robinson Terminal North**

***River Frontage: Approximately 400 feet along the official bulkhead line***

#### History

West Point, which lies at the end of Oronoco Street, was the first important European settlement along the waterfront and predates the city of Alexandria. The warehouse that was constructed in 1732, was the first permanent substantial structure established on the waterfront and led to the founding of the town.

#### Planning

Zoning: W1 – Waterfront Mixed Use

Height District – 30 ft maximum height; 50 ft with SUP east of Union Street; 66 ft west of Union Street.

#### Settlement Agreements

1981 United States and the City of Alexandria

1983 United States, Robinson Terminal Warehouse Corporation (RTWC) and the City of Alexandria.

Settlement agreement signed March 10, 1983, by Robinson Terminal Warehouse Corporation (RTWC), the United States and the City of Alexandria, to settle a suit that had been filed in 1973 to quiet title.

The settlement includes numerous parcels of land in Alexandria. At this time, the parcels in question relate to what is known as Robinson Terminal North.

**Parcel Description: Parcel A**

Portion of Robinson Terminal North property adjacent to Potomac River from Oronoco to Pendleton St, and including railroad tracks along Pendleton St.

**Summary of Agreement:**

RTWC grants to US in perpetuity estate, interest & scenic easement in Parcel A. Parcel A shall remain accessible to the public and all facilities located on Parcel A shall be open to the public. However RTWC may from time to time temporarily interrupt public access in order to exercise its right of access to any pier or other marine facility in the river adjacent to Parcel A or to exercise riparian rights that RTWC may have.

**Restrictions:** No buildings or structures may be more than 12 feet high. No work of activity of any kind, including dredging and placing of fill and riprap, in the waters of or the bed of the river shall be conducted without proper permits from both the United States Department of the Interior and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. No motorized vehicles are permitted except of those related to construction, maintenance, repair, policing, and emergencies, and vehicles used in connection with use of any pier or other marine facility in the river adjacent to Parcel A.

Restrictions take effect when RTCW ceases use of Tract II for warehouses &/or terminal purposes. When restrictions take effect, the US and/or the City of Alexandria may do all things necessary to improve and maintain this parcel for public use in a manner consistent with these restrictions, subject to approval by RTWC. RTWC retains the right to cross this parcel to obtain access to any pier or other marine facility owned or controlled by RTWC in the river adjacent to this parcel, provided that right of access does not unreasonably interfere with public use as described above.

**Parcel Description: Parcel B-1 and B-2**

**Summary of Agreement:** RTWC grants to US in perpetuity estate, interest & scenic easement in Parcel B-1 and B-2. Parcels may be used for open-air shops or restaurants (with or without canopies) entranceways, trees, shrubs or other plantings, patio areas, sundecks, lighting, and security devices.

**Restrictions:** No buildings shall be built on Parcels B-1 and B-2. Restrictions take effect when RTCW ceases use of Tract II for warehouses &/or terminal purposes.

**Parcel Description: Parcel C**

**Summary of Agreement:** RTWC grants to US in perpetuity estate, interest & scenic easement in Parcel C. Uses permitted are restaurants and cafes, commercial shops, residential use, marina services facilities (including related marine clubhouses, food service, boat rental, boat storage, boat repair, and refueling facilities), museums related to the history of the City

of Alexandria and the waterfront, outdoor farmers' and seafood markets, and public park and recreation facilities.

Restrictions: Permanent buildings or structures shall not exceed 30 feet in height. All buildings shall not exceed a floor area ratio of 1.5. Restrictions take effect when RTCW ceases use of Tract II for warehouses &/or terminal purposes.

#### **Parcel Description: Parcel D**

Warehouse on N. Union St. with boundaries on Oronoco St. North & Union St.

##### Summary of Agreement:

RTWC grants to US in perpetuity estate, interest & scenic easement in Parcel D. Permitted uses are restaurants and cafes, commercial shops, residential use, marina service facilities (including related marine clubhouses, food service, boat rental, boat storage, boat repair, and refueling facilities), museums related to the history of the City of Alexandria and the waterfront, outdoor farmers' and seafood markets, and public park and recreation facilities.

Restrictions: Permanent buildings or structures shall not exceed forty-five (45) feet in heights. All buildings shall not exceed, in total, a floor area ratio of 2.4. Restrictions take effect when RTCW ceases use of Tract II for warehouses &/or terminal purposes.

#### **Parcel Description: Parcel E**

Property at Strand St. & Duke St. NOTE: This parcel is under consideration for development at this time so it is not included in this summary.

#### **Parcel Description: Tract I**

Property on West side of North Union St. bounded by Oronoco St. and Pendleton St., adjacent to railroad tracks.

Summary of Agreement: RTWC grants to US in perpetuity estate, interest & scenic easement in Parcel D. Uses permitted are commercial office, commercial retail oriented to pedestrian traffic, restaurants (other than drive-in restaurants) and residential, or any combination of such uses.

Restrictions: No buildings or structures may exceed 66 feet in height. Penthouse with mechanical equipment may be an additional 14 feet high exclusive of a parapet wall up to 3 feet high. The penthouse may not occupy more than one-third of the roof of the building. All buildings shall not exceed floor area ratio of 3.0. Any residential use of tract I shall be restricted to no more than 40 dwelling units per acre. Restrictions take effect when RTCW ceases use of Tract I that had been filed in 1973 for warehouses &/or terminal purposes.

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## **Oronoco Bay Park**

***River Frontage: Approximately 900 feet along the official bulkhead line***

### Planning

Zoning: WPR - Waterfront Parks and Recreation

Height District – 30 ft maximum height

### Settlement Agreements

1981 & 1985 United States and City of Alexandria

The City grants to the US a scenic easement for use as a public park and grants the US title to the submerged lands of the Potomac River contiguous with the park.

### Restrictions:

- Uses may include pedestrian walkways, bicycle trails, seating, landscaped areas, fountains, gardens, play areas, temporary facilities for special events, permanent facilities for the Alexandria High School rowing team (located only on that part of the parcel within the building line), but may not include paved plazas.
- The park must remain open and accessible to the public.
- Height limit 38 ft within the building line and 15 ft elsewhere.
- A 25-foot strip of land must be reserved for constructing a pedestrian walkway and bikepath running in a north-south direction across the park.
- Storage for the rowing facility must be enclosed and covered.

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## **Rivergate**

***River Frontage: Approximately 350 feet along the official bulkhead line***

Rivergate is a 58 townhouse development completed in 1996 built on the former Norton industrial site known for its rendering plant.

### Planning

Zoning: W1 – Waterfront Mixed Use

Height District – 50 ft maximum height

### Settlement Agreements

1982 - United States and Howard Rand Norton III

Norton grants to the US a scenic easement in Parcels A and B and grants the US title to the submerged lands of the Potomac River contiguous with

the property. Parcel A is designated as a public park and recreation area and Parcel B was designated for development.

1985 – United States and the City of Alexandria

The City grants to the US a scenic easement in Parcel F (known as Andrews Park) and grants the US title to the submerged lands of the Potomac River contiguous with the park. Parcel F must be used as a public park and recreation area.

#### Parcel A (Park)

- All uses must remain open and accessible to the public.
- Height limit of 15 ft.

#### Parcel B (Development)

- Uses permitted include restaurants and cafes, commercial shops, offices, residential use, marina service facilities, museums, outdoor seafood and farmers' markets and public park and recreation areas.
- Height limit of 55 feet on Parcel B-1 and 30 feet on parcel B-2.
- FAR 2.0
- Parked cars must be screened from the park

#### Parcel F (Park)

- Uses may include pedestrian walkways, bicycle trails, seating, landscaped areas, fountains, gardens, play areas, temporary facilities for special events, but may not include paved plazas.
- The park must remain open and accessible to the public.
- Height limit of 15 ft.
- A 25-foot strip of land must be reserved for constructing a pedestrian walkway and bikepath running in a north-south direction across the park.

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### **Canal Center**

***River Frontage: Approximately 1,335 feet along the official bulkhead line***

#### **History**

Canal Center Plaza was the site of the former Alexandria Canal, an active commercial route from 1843 to 1886 between the C&O canal in Georgetown and the Alexandria wharf. Coal was the main commodity transported on the canal to the Alexandria wharves, but products such as wheat, corn, whiskey, corn meal and flour were also transported. The lift lock was rediscovered in 1979 and nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The developer of Canal Center Plaza recreated the lift

lock and maintained its original form for present day visitors to see in the City's Tide Lock Park.

Completed in 1987, Canal Center is a four building 530,000sf office complex. It also features a sculpture garden by French artists Anne and Patrick Poirer.

#### Planning

Zoning: W1 – Waterfront Mixed Use

Height District – 77 ft maximum height

#### Settlement Agreements

1983 – United States and Herbert Bryant Associates (HBA)

HBA grants to the US a scenic easement in Parcels A and B and grants the US title to the submerged lands of the Potomac River contiguous with the property. Parcel A is designated as a public park and recreation area and Parcel B was designated for development.

HBA also agrees to construct and maintain the site's public open space and takes responsibility for landscaping, shoreline stabilization, construction of a public promenade along the river and paved public plazas.

#### Restrictions:

##### Parcel A (Park)

- Uses may include pedestrian walkways, bicycle trails, seating, landscaped areas, fountains, gardens, play areas, temporary facilities for special events, paved plazas and the restored Alexandria Canal tidelock.
- The park must remain open and accessible to the public.
- Height limit of 12 ft.
- The owner may use the subsurface of Parcel A for underground parking and other uses consistent with the use of the surface as a public park.

##### Parcel B (Development)

- Uses permitted are restaurants and cafes, commercial shops, offices, residential use (restricted to no more than 40 units per acre), marina service facilities, museums related to the history of the City and the waterfront, outdoor farmers' and seafood markets, and public park and recreation areas.
- Building heights vary.
- Development on parcel B must include a minimum of 30,000 square feet devoted to non-office use.



- The owner must provide to the City of Alexandria, rent free, at least 3,000 square feet for a museum devoted to the history of the city and the waterfront.

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**Mirant (PEPCO)/ Mount Vernon Trail**

***River Frontage: Approximately 1,900 feet along the official bulkhead line***

History

After World War II, the North American Company, a utility trust with extensive holdings, simplified its holdings and transferred ownership of Braddock Light & Power, a small Virginia company, to PEPCO. The post-World War II period was one of high growth and in 1949 PEPCO completed construction of the 80,000-kilowatt first unit of its Potomac River plant. Units were added throughout 1957, ultimately giving the plant a capacity of 499,000 kilowatts.

Planning

Zoning: UT – Utilities and Transportation

Height District – 50 ft maximum height

Settlement Agreements

1949 – United States and Braddock Light & Power

Braddock conveys lands along the Potomac River side of their generating plant to the US; the US grants Braddock a permit, still in force, to perform certain work related to the operation of the plant.

1981 – United States and PEPCO

An agreement to exchange interests in land along the Potomac and to cooperate in the construction of the Mount Vernon trail.

PEPCO also allowed to install and maintain underground and underwater cables, conduits and other equipments on the parcels conveyed to the US and to retain riparian rights necessary for the continued operation of their generating plant.

2008 – City of Alexandria and Mirant

The City reaches an agreement with Mirant that requires the investment of \$34 million by Mirant on new pollution control technology for PM2.5 and PM10 emissions and imposes a PM2.5 emission limit that complies with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

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## **Marina Towers**

***River Frontage: Approximately 606 feet along the official bulkhead line***

### History

This site was at one time home to the Esso (Exxon) tank farm, another indication of the former industrial nature of Alexandria's working waterfront. Completed in 1970, Marina Towers now features 282 condo apartments.

### Planning

Zoning: RC – High Density Apartments  
Height District – 100 ft maximum height

### Settlement Agreements

1980 – United States and Marina Associates, Inc.  
The US quitclaims its interest in exchange for an easement across the Marina Towers property to be used for the Mount Vernon Trail. Marina Associates grants and conveys to the US an easement and right-of-way over and through the easement property. The US owns title to the submerged lands of the Potomac River adjacent to the property.

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## **Daingerfield Island**

***River Frontage: Approximately 625 feet along the official bulkhead line***

### Planning

Zoning: WPR – Waterfront Park and Recreation  
Height District – none